

REMARKS

In response to the above-identified Office Action, Applicants amend the application and seeks reconsideration thereof. Applicants amend Claims 1, 6, 11 and 17. Applicants do not cancel any claims or add any new claims.

The Examiner objects to Claims 1, 11 and 17 because "the magnitude" of each claims lacks sufficient antecedent basis. Applicant has amended claims 1, 11 and 17 responsive to the outstanding objection.

The Examiner objects to Claims 6 and 17 because "said node set" of each claims lacks sufficient antecedent basis. Applicant has amended claims 1 and 17 responsive to the outstanding objection and changed the reference to --each node set--.

The Examiner objects to Claims 6 and 17 because there is no prior recitation of any node set initially being interchanged. Applicant submits that each node set is potentially interchanged during the sorting steps performed in Claims 1 and 17 and a person skilled in the art would recognize that the reference to "still interchanged" is with reference to the various sorting steps.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that all outstanding requirements have been addressed, and the claims pending for examination, namely claims 1-21 are now in condition for allowance, which early action is requested.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge those fees to our Deposit Account No. 02-2666. If a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of this Application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (310) 207-3800.

Respectfully submitted,
BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR, & ZAFMAN

By: _____

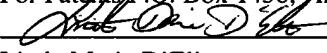
Eric S. Hyman
Reg. No. 30,139

Dated: March 30, 2004

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING:

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class Mail , With Sufficient Postage, In An Envelope Addressed To: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner For Patents P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

 Linda Marie D'Elia

3-30-04
March 30, 2004